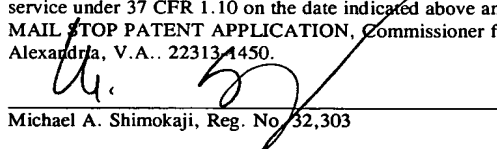


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BLADE SCRAPER AND SHOE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

- 5 **[0001]** This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/423,208, filed on October 31, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- 10 **[0002]** The present invention relates generally to golf accessories and, more specifically, to a method and apparatus for cleaning golf club blades, marking golf ball locations, and repairing divots.
- 15 **[0003]** In golf a ball may be placed on a golf tee, above ground level, for better striking by a golf club. For subsequent shots on a hole, the ball is usually lying on the ground, and a divot (piece of turf torn up by a golf club in striking the ball) is usually made. Sometimes a divot is even made when striking the ball off the tee. In either event, the blade of the golf club may become dirty from making a divot. The grooves on the blade of the golf club may become filled with dirt or other debris, impairing the ability of the grooves to perform their
- 20 function (control the spin of the ball). Cleaning the grooves of golf club blades dirtied during a round of golf is a continuing operation.
- 25 **[0004]** If the grooves remain clogged, there may not be an efficient transfer of energy from the golf club blade to the golf ball and the golf ball may not have any backspin. In response to this problem various types of groove cleaning devices have been developed, for example, see U.S. Pat. No. 3,763,515. However, developing a groove cleaner that works well and that is readily

available for use has proven to be exceedingly difficult. These grove cleaners are usually kept inside a golf bag, golf cart, or another type of compartment. The golfer must continually search for, retrieve, and replace such a groove cleaner when needing to clean a golf club blade, repair a divot, or mark a ball location.

[0005] As can be seen, there is a need for an improved apparatus and method for cleaning golf club blades, repairing divots, and marking balls.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In one aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for cleaning a golf club comprises a base having an aperture; and an open slot extending from the aperture to an edge of the base.

[0007] In an alternative aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for cleaning a golf club comprises a golf shoe; a base attached to the golf shoe; and an open slot extending to an edge of the base.

[0008] In another aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for cleaning a golf club comprises a golf shoe; a base attached to an upper of the golf shoe with the base including an aperture; an open slot extending from the aperture to an edge of the base; and an alignment channel in the base.

[0009] In yet another aspect of the present invention, a golf shoe comprises an upper; a base attached to the upper with the base including an aperture; an open slot extending from the aperture to an edge of the base; a closed slot in the base; an alignment channel in the base; a divot tool removeably attached to the base; and a ball marker removeably attached to the base.

[0010] In a further aspect of the present invention, a method for cleaning a golf club comprises swiping a blade of a golf club across a blade scraper; and removing debris from the blade of the golf club; wherein the blade scraper comprises a base having an aperture; an open slot extending from the aperture

to an edge of the base; a closed slot in the base; and an alignment channel in the base.

[0011] These and other aspects, objects, features and advantages of the present invention, are specifically set forth in, or will become apparent from, the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment of the invention when
5 read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 [0012] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a blade scraper and shoe, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0013] Figure 2 is another perspective view of a blade scraper and shoe, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0014] Figure 3 is yet another perspective view of a blade scraper shoe,
15 according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0015] Figure 4 is a perspective view of a blade scraper base, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0016] Figure 5 is perspective view of a divot tool, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

20 [0017] Figure 6 is a side view of a ball marker, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0018] Figure 7 is an exploded perspective view of the blade scraper of Figure 3, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0019] Figure 8 is another exploded perspective view of the blade scraper of
25 Figure 3, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0020] Figure 9 is a perspective view of the blade scraper of Figures 8 and 9, as assembled, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0021] Figure 10 is an exploded side view of the blade scraper of Figure 3, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] Figure 11 is another exploded side view of the blade scraper of Figure 3, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0023] Figure 12 is a side view of the blade scraper of Figure 10;

[0024] Figure 13 is another side view of the blade scraper of Figure 10;

5 **[0025]** Figure 14 is a method of cleaning a golf club according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

10 **[0026]** The following detailed description is of the best currently contemplated modes of carrying out the invention. The description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, but is made merely for the purpose of illustrating the general principles of the invention, since the scope of the invention is best defined by the appended claims.

15 **[0027]** Broadly, the present invention provides a golf shoe that incorporates a blade scraper that can be used to scrape and clean debris from the blade of a golf club. In one aspect of the present invention, the golf shoe of the present invention permanently incorporates the blade scraper. In another aspect of the present invention, the blade scraper is not permanently incorporated into the
20 golf shoe but can be added to an off-the-shelf golf shoe.

[0028] Generally, the blade scraper may include a ball marker and/or divot tool for use during the play of golf. Alternatively, the blade scraper may have neither the ball marker nor divot tool.

[0029] In more specifically describing the present invention, and as can be appreciated from Figure 1, the present invention provides a blade scraper 20
25 that can be a permanent part of a golf shoe 32, for example, being permanently attached to an upper 34 of the golf shoe 32, or may be added to an off-the-shelf golf shoe 32, for example, by securing the blade scraper 20 with a shoelace 46 threaded through apertures 24. The upper 34 may be understood as being a
30 part of a golf shoe 32 above a sole 38.

[0030] The blade scraper 20 may be permanently attached to the golf shoe 32, for example, by gluing the blade scraper 20 to the upper 34. The blade scraper 20 may also be permanently attached by sewing portions of the upper 34 of the golf shoe 32 around the blade scraper 20. Alternatively, as shown in
5 Figures 1 and 3, the blade scraper 20 may be removeably attached to the golf shoe 32, for example, by threading shoelaces 46 through apertures 24 to secure the blade scraper 20 to the golf shoe 32. Another way to removeably attach the blade scraper 20 to the upper 34 of the golf shoe 32 may involve the use of a hook-and-loop type of fastener tape (not shown) onto the upper 34 of
10 the golf shoe 32. Optionally, the blade scraper 20 may be attached, removeably or permanently, to other parts of the golf shoe 32.

[0031] Whether the blade scraper 20 is removeably attached, or permanently attached, an edge 21b of the blade scraper 20 may extend away from the upper 34 of the golf shoe 32, as shown in Figure 2. In this fashion, the blade scraper
15 20 may easily scrape debris from a blade 36 of a golf club 30 (Figure 14). With minimal effort, and without having to bend over or reach, a golfer may keep the blade scraper 20 in a stationary position and swipe the blade 36 of a golf club 30 across the scraper 20 to clean off debris. Alternatively, a golfer may keep the club blade 36 in a stationary position and swipe the blade scraper 20 across
20 the blade 36 of the golf club 30. If a divot tool 22 and/or ball marker 23 are needed during the course of play, a golfer needs only reach to the golf shoe 32 rather than hunt through a golf bag for such accessories (Figure 3).

[0032] Referring now to Figure 4, the blade scraper 20 may include a base 21 that can be manufactured from any suitable durable material, such as metal,
25 plastic, and the like. The base 21 may be formed in a generally rectangular shape with a bottom surface 10; edges 21a, 21b, 21c and 21d; and top surface 16. The bottom surface 10 of blade scraper 20 may be flat.

[0033] As shown in Figure 9, the base 21 may have a plurality of apertures 24 – such as two apertures 24 – through which shoelaces 46 of the golf shoe 32
30 can pass. The base 21 may further include an open slot 25 that can extend

from at least one of the apertures 24 and to an edge 21a of the base 21. The open slot 25 may enable a shoelace 46 to pass through the open slot 25 and into the aperture 24 from which the open slot 25 extends. This may be desired when the blade scraper 20 is being added to an off-the-shelf golf shoe 32 (Figure 3).

5 [0034] The base 21 may also include a closed slot 26 that can receive a stem 23a of the ball marker 23. Additionally, the closed slot 26 may receive a stud 22a of the divot tool 22 whereby the stem 23a may pass through the stud 22a. Further, the base 21 may have at least one alignment channel 27 that can receive a part of the divot tool 22 to align the divot tool 22 to the base 21.

10 [0035] As shown in Figures 11 and 12, at least one edge of the base 21 (for example, edge 21b) can be configured with a taper 18 that enables a golfer to pull the blade 36 of a golf club 30 across the edge 21a and thereby clean the blade 36. The scraping edge 21a is desirably provided with a straight configuration to facilitate cleaning of golf club faces or blades 36 that generally have a planar surface configuration. The remaining edges, 21c and 21d, of the base 21 are generally shown with a straight configuration; however, other configurations are contemplated.

15 [0036] The divot tool 22 shown in Figure 5 may be manufactured from any suitable durable material, such as metal, plastic, and the like. The divot tool 22 can include the stud 22a mentioned above, together with a U-shaped end 22b. The divot tool 22 may be used to alter or repair divots. As shown in Figure 9, the U-shaped end 22b can facilitate receiving a shoelace 46 that passes through one of the apertures 24. At an end opposite the U-shaped end 22b, a recess 22c in the divot tool 22 may cover the other aperture 24 and prevent the release of a shoelace 46 from such other aperture 24.

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[0037] As seen in Figure 6, a ball marker 23 may have a round disc (head) 23b with a stem 23a. The ball marker 23 may be manufactured from any suitable durable material, such as metal, plastic, and the like.

[0038] As seen in Figures 7, 8, 10, and 11, the blade scraper 20 may also be assembled to hold the divot tool 22 and/or the ball marker 23. The stem 23a of the ball marker 23 may be inserted into the closed slot 26 of the base 21. Optionally, the stem 23a of the ball marker 23 may also be inserted into stud 22a to secure the divot tool 22 to the base 21. The divot tool 22 may be attached to the base 21 without the ball marker 23. One example of attaching the divot tool 22 to the base 21 is inserting the stud 22a of the divot tool 22 into the closed slot 26.

[0039] As shown in Figure 14, a method for cleaning a golf club 30 may be performed by swiping the blade 36 of a golf club 30 across a blade scraper 20; and removing debris 40 from the blade 36 of the golf club 30. Movement of the blade scraper 20 may act to remove debris 40 from grooves 42, which may be separated by flat portions 44. The method may optionally be performed by swiping the blade scraper 20 across the blade 36 of the golf club 30 to remove debris 40 from the blade 36 of the golf club 30.

[0040] Although the present invention has been described in considerable detail with reference to certain preferred versions thereof, other versions are possible. Therefore, the spirit and scope of the appended claims should not be limited to the description of the preferred versions contained therein.